(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) In view of the shortfall in loading of core sector commodities such as Coal, Food-grains, Iron and Steel, Cement and Iron Ore, freight earnings have also dropped below the expected level. However, there is some bouyancy in Passenger, Other Coaching and Sundry earnings. With this, the total earnings of the Railways for the current financial year, are being estimated to be short of the target by Rs. 1056 crores.

(c) and (d) Zonal railways have been directed to make special efforts to capture additional freight traffic in core sectors as also in other areas so as to make good the shortfall to the extent possible. The steps taken by Ministry of Railways to attract more traffic, inter alia, include reduction in classification of certain commodities, providing 'Volume Discount' on selected commodities, delegating full powers to the General Managers to quote Station-to-Station rates and preparing a special package for Steel sector. Besides, the zonal railways have also been directed to enhance passenger earnings, intensify ticket checking, pursue recovery of outstanding dues and also control Ordinary Working Expenses.

Laying of double line on Ghaziabad-Moradabad route

1205. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:
SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to lay double line on Ghaziabad-Moradabad rail route; if so, the time schedule and if not, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether Government are aware that both the passenger and goods trains run late by several hours due to single rail line there, resulting in undue delay in transportation of goods;

(c) if so, whether Government propose to make specific provisions in the budget to convert this line in the next two years; if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. Ghaziabad-Mehrauli has already been doubled. Mehrauli to Hapur is targetted for completion by March, 2000. Moradabad-Amroha has been included in budget 1999-2000. The remaining section will be taken up for doubling in the coming years.

(c) The work would be completed in the coming years as per availability of resources.

(d) Does not arise.

Changes in norms for rail passes

1206. SHRI ANANTA SETHI; Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made some changes in the norms to give rail passes to Ex-MPs, freedom fighters disabled, etc.;

(b) if so, what are those changes; and

(c) the details of circumstances which led to make such changes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (c) I Class/

IIAC Complimentary Card Passes issued to Ex-MPs at Railways cost, were cancelled w.e.f. 06.01.1999 due to a judgement by Allahabad High Court in a Public Interest Litigation. Subsequently, on the basis of an Ordinance promulgated by the President on 18.01.1999, instructions were issued on 02.02.1999 to permit Ex-MPs the same travel facilities on the authority of Ex-MP photo identity cards issued to them by the Lok Sabha/Rajya Sabha Secretariat. There is no change in the norm in respect of passes issued to freedom fighters. Disabled are not issued any free passes.

Decline in freight traffic

1207. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a decline in the freight traffic on Indian Railways during 1998-99;

(b) if so, the target set and the actuals in this regard during 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(c) the details of reasons for decline in the freight traffic; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The target and actuals of freight traffic on Indian Railways for 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 are as under:

(Figures in million tonnes)

Year	Target	Actuals
1996-97	410.00	409.02
1997-98	430.00	429.38
1998-99 (April-Jan.)	369.10	343.40

(c) Drop in demand from the major core sectors of the economy which include power, coal, foodgrains, cement and steel has been responsible for the fall in the loading level.

(d) Ministry of Railways is maintaining continuous close liaison both with the rail-user organisations as well as the concerned Ministries/Departments for maximising movement of traffic by rail. Also close monitoring is being done both at the field as well as at the Railway Ministry levels to ensure smooth movement of freight traffic.

Killing of five persons by local train in Calcutta

1208. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item 'Bidhannagar a death trap for passengers— Risk your life or miss the train' appearing in the "Statesman", Calcutta dated 14th February, 1999 killing of five people by a local train on 12th February, 1999;

(b) if so, the immediate action taken by the Railway authorities to improve the public address system; and

(c) the short-term and long-term plan to avoid such tragedies, including broadening of over-bridge?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) To ensure safe journey of passengers as well as to prevent accidents, arrangements have been made at Bidhannagar Road Railways Station to ensure that the Public Address System is in working order. Battery back up is also available in case of failure of local power supply and one additional point of loud